

Serial No. 10/808,590

Attorney Docket No. 26B-032-RCE

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7 are pending. Claims 6 and 8-13 have been canceled. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1 and 4-7 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakajima *et al.* The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

The claimed invention includes a blocking piece for blocking a slit. The slit is for permitting a core body to be removed when performing molding process. The claimed blocking piece has a lock mechanism for preventing detachment of the blocking piece due to the restoring force of the bent blocking piece.

The Nakajima *et al.* reference fails to disclose many of the claimed features. For example, Nakajima *et al.* reference fails to disclose a base piece portion formed to extend from an attachable mounting surface of the mounting base portion of the molded portion. There is nothing in the Nakajima *et al.* reference that corresponds to this claim language, and the examiner has not pointed to anything in the drawings or specification that satisfies this claim language.

Further, the Nakajima *et al.* reference fails to disclose an insertion portion integrally formed to extend substantially perpendicularly from the base piece portion. Claim 1 requires the insertion portion to be constructed to be inserted into the slit by bending the base piece portion around a part thereof. There is nothing in the Nakajima *et al.* reference that corresponds to this claim language, and the examiner has not pointed to anything in the drawings or specification that satisfies this claim language.

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Also, the Nakajima *et al.* reference fails to disclose a lock portion that is integrally formed with the insertion portion to be fitted and locked on an inner surface of the mounting base portion, which faces the hollow portion, when the blocking piece is bent and the insertion portion is inserted into the slit.

The office action seems to indicate that the molded part 30 of Nakajima *et al.* closes or blocks the slit. However, the molded part 30 of Nakajima *et al.* does not block the slit. Therefore, the molded part 30 of Nakajima *et al.* cannot correspond to the claimed "blocking piece." In the views of Figs. 7, 12 and 13 of Nakajima *et al.*, one can see that the molded part 30 keeps the slit open and does not block the slit.

The office action merely alleges that Figs. 2-6 of Nakajima *et al.* disclose the claimed blocking piece but fails to specify which part of the Nakajima *et al.* reference discloses the claimed blocking piece, which includes the base piece portion, the insertion portion, and the lock portion. Such vague reasons for rejection cannot support a *prima facie* case, and this rejection should be either withdrawn or explained with specific reference to the drawings and specification of Nakajima *et al.*

Further, the Nakajima *et al.* reference does not disclose the feature newly added to claim 1 from original claim 6. That is, claim 1 now recites that the thickness of the insertion portion is set to be substantially equal to width of the slit. Thus, the insertion portion can be fitted into the slit easily and without widening the slit, and the engaged state of the blocking piece and the mounting base portion can be further stabilized, and degradation in the seal performance of the molded portion is suppressed. Therefore, amended claim 1 is patentably distinguished from the Nakajima *et al.* reference.

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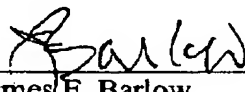
Claims 4, 5, and 7 depend on claim 1 and are considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakajima *et al.* The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn because claims 2 and 3 depend on claim 1 and are considered to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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